## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A communications network comprising:

at least one communication virtualizer;

a plurality of network-attached store computers connected to said communication virtualizer, wherein said plurality of network-attached store computers are configured to appear as a single available network-attached store computer; and

at least one client computer connected to said communication virtualizer.

2. The communications network of claim 1, further comprising an internal network of connection nodes connecting said communication virtualizer with said network-attached store computers.

3. The communications network of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of external network connections for facilitating a transfer of requests sent by said client computer to said communication virtualizer.

4. The communications network of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of external connection paths for facilitating direct communication between said network-attached store computers and said client computer.

5. The communications network of claim 1, further comprising an Ethernet networking hardware and medium access protocol for facilitating communication within said communication network.

6. The communications network of claim 1,further comprising a Transmission Control Protocol / Internet Protocol suite for facilitating communication between said network-attached store computers and said client computer.

7. The communications network of claim 1, further comprising a storage access protocol for facilitating communication between a storage component within said communications network and remaining components within said communications network.

8. The communications network of claim 7, further comprising a storage access protocol comprises a Network File System protocol.

9. The communications network of claim 7, further comprising a storage access protocol comprises a Common Internet File System protocol.

10. The communications network of claim 1, wherein said communication virtualizer comprises a network router.

11. The communications network of claim 1, further comprising a communication

virtualizer file switch connected to a client computer and a server computer for sending requests from said client computer to said network-attached store and from said network-attached store back to said client computer.

12. A method of communication over a communications network, said method comprising:

sending requests for storage originated by at least one client computer over said communications network;

receiving said requests for storage in at least one communication virtualizer; and

transmitting the received requests for storage to a plurality of network-attached store computers connected to said communication virtualizer, wherein said plurality of network-attached store computers are configured to appear as a single network-attached store computer.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein said communication virtualizer, upon receiving requests from said client computer, transmits said request for storage to a chosen network-attached store computer based on a capability of said chosen network-attached store computer to properly process said request for storage.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein said requests for storage are transmitted as a series of packets, each packet comprising a portion of the request for storage, and wherein each packet comprises a packet sequence number.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein said packets comprising a similar request for storage are linked together using a request identifier and said packet sequence number, wherein each request for storage comprises a unique request identifier that is shared among said packets comprising said similar request.

16. The method of claim 12, wherein said network-attached store computer is configured for:

receiving said requests for storage from said communication virtualizer;

processing said request for storage;

creating a corresponding response to said request for storage;

packetizing said corresponding response; and

sending said corresponding response to said communication virtualizer.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said communication virtualizer is configured for:

receiving said corresponding response from said network-attached store computer;

determining a chosen client computer to which said corresponding response should be routed to; and

routing said corresponding response to a chosen client computer.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein said chosen client computer is configured for:

receiving said corresponding response from said communication virtualizer;

de-packetizing said corresponding response; and

routing said corresponding response to an initiating application.

19. The method of claim 15, wherein said packets are categorized from a zeroth (*0*th) packet to an *i*th packet.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein said communication virtualizer determines which network-attached store computer to transmit said request for storage to by examining said zeroth packet in said request.

21. The method of claim 19, further comprising:

said client computer sending standard Ethernet packets to said communication virtualizer; and

said communication virtualizer combining a plurality of standard Ethernet packets comprising a single request for storage into a single standard Ethernet packet.

22. The method of claim 21, further comprising:

said network-attached store computer sending a standard Ethernet packet to said communication virtualizer in reply to a client computer request; and

said communication virtualizer dividing said standard Ethernet packet into a plurality of standard Ethernet packets to send to said client computer as a response comprising multiple standard Ethernet packets.

23. A system for facilitating communication between a client computer and a host computer, said system comprising:

means for sending requests for storage originated by at least one client computer over said communications network;

means for receiving said requests for storage in at least one communication virtualizer; and

means for transmitting the received requests for storage to a plurality of network-attached store computers connected to said communication virtualizer, wherein said plurality of network-attached store computers are configured to appear as a single network-attached store computer.